

# Lawmaker suggests wild fate for Sundance

*Wilderness? Not a bad idea, Redford aide says.*

By Karl Cates  
Deseret News staff writer

12 Nov 1996

A rural lawmaker is proposing legislation that would purport to turn actor Robert Redford's Sundance Resort into a wilderness area.

A spokeswoman for the actor responded Tuesday by saying it's not a bad idea.

"If he's willing to take somebody else's land, maybe he'd like to contribute some of his own," said Rep. Bradley T. Johnson, R-Aurora, who has asked legislative counsel to draft language for a resolution tentatively titled "Sundance Wilderness Area."

Julie Mack, a Sundance Group

representative, said its owner would happily accept wilderness designation for most of the area, noting that all but 75 of Sundance's 6,000 acres remain undeveloped.

"We're working right now to find some way to preserve that forever," said Mack. "If the statesman down in Sevier County would do that for us, we'd be grateful."

Johnson said the idea to claim the resort as a public holding came from constituents mad at Redford for his vocal advocacy of Utah's new Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. The 1.7 million-acre preserve, established by a surprise presidential proclama-

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He said his resolution is meant to tweak environmentalists who supported the national monument, established partly to kill a proposed coal mine in Kane County.

Mack said part of Sundance could never be designated wilderness because of development that includes buildings, parking lots, roads and ski lifts.

"It would be kind of silly to say all the lands could qualify as wilderness area, but a lot of them could," she said.

She also noted an important dis-

inction between Sundance and the lands claimed by the new monument. "These (at Sundance) are private lands. The monument is public lands that belong to everyone and they really weren't taken by anybody."

Mike Matz, executive director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, said a good part of the Sundance area would not fit most definitions of wilderness and said Johnson's proposal was "yet another example of Utah's politicians not quite understanding what wilderness is."

Johnson said the issue raises broader questions about federal land management in the West.

"We have a hard time in southern Utah making a living because we don't have access to the land, and all the wealth really comes from the land," said Johnson.

"We believe that our forefathers paid a great price for this land and we think we have a right to have a significant voice in the way this land is managed and protected," he said. "We believe it can be used for the benefit of all the people of Utah and still be protected."

"Every one of us is very concerned about protecting the land because the land is so tremendously important to us . . . but we still have an obligation to use it."

Sundance is situated on the eastern slope of Mount Timpanogos in Provo Canyon, between Orem and Heber City. The resort operates year-round.



Joining President Clinton at the signing are Sen. Bill Bradley, back, Rep. Robert Torricelli, Vice President Al Gore and Bruce Babbitt.

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"We see lots of people that are very interested in taking land away from someone else to preserve it, but we don't see many of them wanting to make a sacrifice themselves," said Johnson, a Sevier County rancher.

Though Johnson conceded that no clear mechanism exists in Utah government for such a move, he said he wants to make a point with his proposal.

"Mr. Redford has made a tremendous amount of money off what land he has and he says he wants to lock up land the rest of the people live by and depend on," said Johnson, whose district includes parts of Sevier, Sanpete and Emery counties.

He said his resolution is meant to tweak environmentalists who supported the national monument, established partly to kill a proposed coal mine in Kane County.

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